

# THE ASYLUM

*Quarterly Journal of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society*

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Volume XII, No. 2	Spring, 1994
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# WHO SOLD OVER 75% OF RARE AMERICAN NUMISMATIC BOOKS AUCTIONED 1980-1991?

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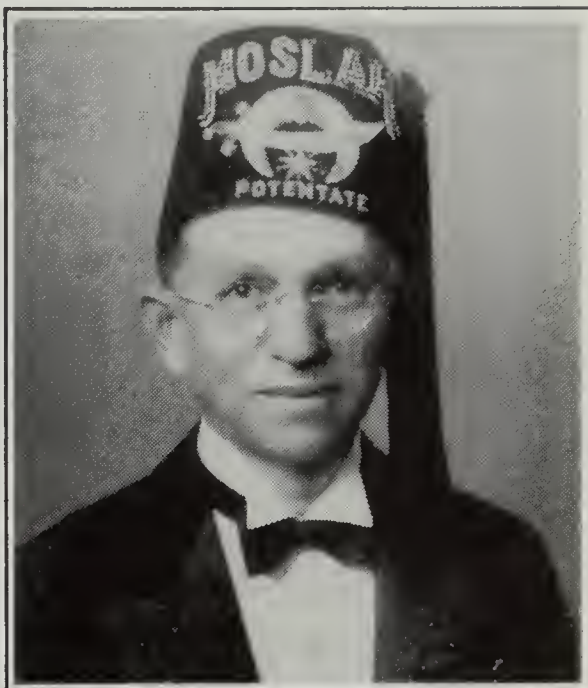
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MEHL'S FRENCH CATALOGUE AS  
SEEN BY GEORGE CLAPP  
Charles Davis, NLG

In early 1929, Dr. George French of Rochester sold his extensive collection of United States Large Cents, some 832 pieces, to Fort Worth dealer B. Max Mehl. Announced in the May 1929 issue of *The Numismatist* as the largest transaction involving a single series at \$50,000 (although other accounts indicate this was Mehl hype, the actual amount being nearer \$35,000) with both a press release and a full page ad ostensibly paid for by French, the large cent fraternity waited for nearly a year for Mehl to issue a catalogue. In May 1930, the *Celebrated Collection of Large United States Cents Formed by Dr. Geo. P. French*, a Fixed Price List rather than an auction, was published with much of the usual Mehl flourish which included three distinct editions. All copies contained the same text, 139 pages, 832 coins, with the regular copies being bound in oversized tan card covers.



B. Max Mehl



George H. Clapp

Those at the top of Mehl's pecking list (Colonel Green, H. A. Sternberg, and French's Rochester dealer George Bauer) received a copy bound in full morocco. Other luminaries received the regular card covered edition but with a name printed in white ink at the bottom of the front cover. The catalogue was not dated, but virtually every presentation copy we have seen was inscribed May 9, 1930, give or take a few days.

Using the logic employed by Sherlock Holmes, who once deduced that the size 8 hat he had found belonged to an intelligent person (reasoning that a man with so big a head must have *something* in it), we had always assumed that

the French catalogue was an important contribution to large cent literature. Descriptions are an impressive 4-6 lines per coin, a length which often exceeded the amount of text in the standard references - Doughty in particular. George Clapp, however, recipient of one of the "name in white ink editions," saw through the smoke and annotated his copy in a manner that would have pleased Ed Frossard and the Bushnell catalogue beaters nearly fifty years earlier. In fact, the French catalogue must have been one of Clapp's favorite scratch pads, as he continually went back and annotated it during the nineteen years period from its issue to his death. Preserved in the Carnegie Library, Clapp's copy should be transcribed and offered by booksellers as an addenda to every French Catalogue.

At the time Clapp had a deep interest in large cent scholarship and was working on his standard reference for the dates 1798-1799, a work he published privately in 1931. His comments cite Mehl for incompetent and incorrect statements as well as for using the English language in a manner only Casey Stengel could understand. Most of the comments are confined to the early dates, as Clapp noted that he had neither the inclination nor the patience to deal with those after 1816.

#### Preface (General Commentary)

**Clapp:** Have never seen a catalogue with more false and/or misleading statements.

**Mehl:** Whenever the Doctor had the opportunity to purchase a specimen he lacked, he bought it regardless of price.

**Clapp:** Mehl told me he refused to accept bids from French as he had so much trouble in getting his money.

**Mehl:** Any specimen will be cheerfully sent on approval to collectors.

**Clapp:** I asked to have the 1798s sent for study as I was working on this date. He did so and then wired the Express Co to return them without delivery. Mehl's only explanation of this very unbusinesslike procedure was that he spent \$40,000 per year in advertising.

Nº2 **Mehl:** Steel proof. Frosty ...

**Clapp:** Not a proof, and never was. Frosty surface due to a thin coating of paraffine

#### Page 10

Mehl uses a 1795 Sheldon 76b to illustrate the heading Liberty Cap Cents of 1793.

**Clapp:** Pretty tough to have to use a cut of 1795 to illustrate 1793.



Nº14 **Mehl:** The Liberty Cap Cents of 1793 are rare in any condition, but when so remarkable as is this specimen, its rarity and value can hardly be estimated. The box in which the coin comes is marked as having cost \$1,000.00

**Clapp:** Pretty high price for the box. Wonder what the cent cost?

Nº17 **Mehl:** Obverse strictly very good, can be classed as fine for coin.

**Clapp:** Mehl should call it "unc on account of rarity"

Nº17 **Mehl:** Only three or four specimens known

**Clapp:** Of which I have four or five

Page 13

**Mehl:** The Series of 1794 Cents; The most complete set in existence

**Clapp:** 69, count 'em; I have 157

Nº22 **Mehl:** The only known specimen of this variety

**Clapp:** Bunk. I have very fine @\$23.50. One sold within the last 8 years

Nº29 **Mehl:** ... distinguishing feature of this variety is the circle of 87 minute stars.

**Clapp:** Frossard said 87 stars; Gilbert corrected to 94. There are 93 or 94, probably 94 to correspond with the date. Mehl copied Frossard Hays without checking.

Nº32 **Mehl:** Finest known

**Clapp:** Rats!

Nº33 **Mehl:** Die break from the border to hair on the obverse

**Clapp:** Have never seen hair on the reverse

Nº34 **Mehl:** Fine for coin

**Clapp:** This usually means "not quite good"

Nº41 **Mehl:** Same variety as last but with perfect die on reverse. Classed as twice the rarity of the perfect die variety

**Clapp:** How can the perfect die be twice as rare as the perfect die?

Nº59 **Mehl:** Struck crosswise, the reverse die undoubtedly turned

**Clapp:** How did he ever guess it?

Nº72 **Mehl:** Both obverse and reverse are perfect dies. Only the faintest die break is visible on the reverse.

**Clapp:** How can reverse be perfect if it shows a die break?

- Nº86 **Mehl:** Unique - the only known specimen.  
**Clapp:** Bunk! I have three of them and know of three others.
- Nº89 **Mehl:** Doughty No 66 but with letters indented.  
**Clapp:** "Letters indented" means absolutely nothing.
- Nº95 **Mehl:** The last and only one I offered was the one in my sale of the Dr Wilharm Collection in February 1921.  
**Clapp:** Mehl sold one in October, 1921. V.G. for \$10.50. I have picked up 4 in the past 9 years.
- Nº97 **Mehl:** The box in which this coin came to me is marked UNIQUE.  
**Clapp:** The box may be unique, but the cent is not.
- Nº99 **Mehl:** This is a combination of the obverse and reverse dies.  
**Clapp:** What does this mean. All cents have obverse and reverse.
- Nº100 **Mehl:** Excessively rare in this collection  
**Clapp:** Would it be rare in another collection?
- Nº117 **Mehl:** Very rare variety  
**Clapp:** About the commonest
- Nº123 **Mehl:** Seldom found good  
**Clapp:** Correct! Generally better than good
- Page 39 (the 1798s):  
**Clapp:** Found so many doubtful attributions that I gave up trying to work them out.
- Nº183 **Mehl:** While the 1798 cents are not rare dates but any of them are extremely rare in choice condition, especially so the rare varieties.  
**Clapp:** English as she is wrote. In other words, the "rare" ones are "rare."
- Nº198 **Mehl:** struck from so-called cancelled dies  
**Clapp:** Have seen this, and the cancellation was made on the coin with a knife.
- Nº215 **Mehl:** A beautiful and very rare Cent. \$110.00  
**Clapp:** My Unc cost \$6.50
- Nº227 **Mehl:** Probably unique  
**Clapp:** Not even rare

N<sup>o</sup>227 **Mehl:** Originally classed as uncirculated

**Clapp:** I suppose this was it left the mint

N<sup>o</sup>301 **Mehl:** 1/100 over 1/1000

**Clapp:** If true, this is unique

**Mehl:** Highest rarity and believed to be unique

**Clapp:** More bunk!

**Mehl:** Hardly perceptible nicks due to cabinet friction

**Clapp:** Must have his cabinet lined with broken stone

N<sup>o</sup>325 **Mehl:** Doughty 193 - obverse die break

N<sup>o</sup>326 **Mehl:** Doughty 193 - perfect die obverse struck from rusty dies

**Clapp:** How could "rusty dies" used for the perfect die also strike an unc after die cracks.

N<sup>o</sup>339 **Mehl:** The Mint restrike from rusty dies of an 1803 Cent with a 4 sunk in the die. Proof

**Clapp:** A "Proof" of an old rusted altered die should be unique.

N<sup>o</sup>357 **Mehl:** Tiny break at eye of Liberty

**Clapp:** Probably a dent

N<sup>o</sup>363 **Mehl:** This is the same reverse as used in the Cents of 1810, Doughty No 213.

**Clapp:** Copied from Doughty. It is **not** same rev as 1810 as anyone can tell who takes the trouble to study it.

Page 78 (Cents of 1817)

**Mehl:** Only a lifetime of continuous persistent effort could have brought together such a remarkable set of these cents.

**Clapp:** The two rare ones are missing. Must not be a very long lifetime.

N<sup>o</sup>528 **Mehl:** 1833/31. Not in Andrews. Unique \$25.00

**Clapp:** It is A-1. The so-called 1 under 3 is nothing but a flan defect which readily shows up under a glass. This coin was submitted to me by Henry Hines, worth about five cents.

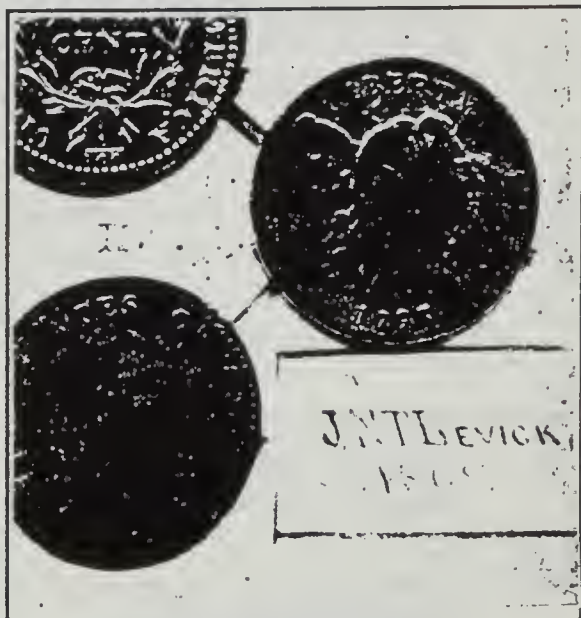
... and on and on.

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TWO VARIETIES OF THE  
LEVICK PLATE OF 1793 CENTS  
Frank Van Zandt

Recently George Kolbe received for consignment an unbacked loose copy of the famous photographic plate prepared by J. N. T. Levick to accompany Sylvester Crosby's monograph on the cents of 1793 in *The American Journal of Numismatics*. When he compared this plate with the one in his personal set of A.J.N.s, he noticed that they were slightly different. Thinking he had, perhaps, a unique prototype, he contacted the editor of *The Asylum* to see which plate he had in his set. Surprise, surprise, the copy in Davis' set was identical to the consigned copy, not Kolbe's bound one. The editor, in turn, contacted this writer who happens to have two copies of the Crosby/Levick work. As it turned out, one was of each variety.

Both plates appear to depict the same coins in the same physical arrangement. One, which we will call the early plate, has Levick's name written in script, "J. N. T. Levick, 1868"



The Early Plate



The Later Plate

in a box in the lower right hand corner of the plate. The second, or later plate, has Levick's signature typeset, "Compiled by Joseph N. T. Levick," (no date) on a slip which was probably pasted onto the photograph with no box outlining it.

In a random sample of eight complete or nearly complete sets, it was found that there were four sets with the early plate with Levick's in the box and four with a printed name without the box. Since in some cases we know who the original owners were, it was possible to determine that the earlier plates seemed to belong to corresponding members of the sponsoring American Numismatic and Archaeological Society, and the later plates belonged to New York or resident members.



Both the A.N.A. and A.N.S. libraries, plus one set known to have been made up in the 1950s from A.N.S. old stock have the later plate with the printed name.

Thus, there is no doubt that there are two separate printings of the Levick plate, and perhaps there are others that have not yet been discovered yet or simply were not used for publication purposes. So why did two separate plates come to be used in a single issue of *The American Journal of Numismatics* for 1869.

There is some interesting discussion in the A.J.N. about these plates which may raise more questions than answers. The first of appears in Volume III, Nº11, page 92 in an article written by Levick himself, thanking Mr. Crosby for his minute details of the varieties of the 1793 cents that accompanied his photographs. Note that "photo-graphs" (plural) is used. Are there, in fact, just two photographs, or are there several?

It is also stated that the photo contains actual specimens and not electrotypes, as Levick discussed counterfeits and manufactured specimens. He also requested that unusual specimens be sent to him directly and that he would be the only individual to handle them, that they would be suspended on a board by pinpoints until they had been photographed, and that he would be only the assembler of the plate and not the actual photographer.

In the issue of the A.J.N. accompanying the plate, Vol. III, Nº12, page 97, Levick notes that the photo did not do justice to the coins themselves, and that if the coins marked 6, 12, K, could be improved by securing better specimens, then an improved photo could be made. In comparing the two plates themselves, some interesting observations come to light which suggest different times for the taking of the photographs. In the plate with the signed name, the holders of the coins are more distinct than in the printed name plate. Furthermore, the signed plate seems to have a shadow cast to the bottom of each coin, while the printed name plate has the shadow to the top and slightly right of the coins.

Using a magnifying glass to study the three coins (6, 12, K), all appear to be the same coins, even though references today indicate that better specimens do exist. While the second plate may have been made to satisfy demand, the fact that it appears to have been distributed only to A.N.A.S. members, perhaps at a monthly meeting, suggests that it was made as an improvement. The discovery of a set of A.J.N.s with both plates bound in would certainly substantiate this supposition.

Whatever the reason for the two plates, it is important for collectors to know of their existence, and that one is superior to the other. It would be interesting to know the survival rates of each.

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THE PRINTER'S DEVIL  
Joel J. Orosz, NLG

Hang the bunting and pop the corks! The Academy of Wretched Excess in Numismatic Advertisement is proud to present the fifth anniversary edition of the "Shammies," honoring excellence in the employment of hyperbole to increase sales. The Academy is pleased to note that a record number of entries grace the pages to follow, including new sections highlighting hype in ads from other hobbies, and inadvertently humorous ad copy served up by numismatic dealers. So, settle into an arm chair, adjust the light, and hold your nose. The 1994 Shammies are about to begin.

The "jumbo shrimp" award for oxymorons goes to the Mount Vernon Coin Co, which notes "our firm was founded by active collectors for collectors, and its tremendous success is due entirely to the support of collectors like you." In the same ad, they note, "you, too, can shop where the dealers shop." Coin World (CW), November 30, 1992, page 19.

The "bull on bullion" award goes to the Coin Shack, for urging its customers to "Buy NOW, while the price of silver is so low." Judge's comment: The price of silver has been low for the past 13 years! CW, November 30, 1992, page 39.

The "more we sell, the more we lose" award goes to Coast to Coast Coins for "six specials...priced very near or below our cost." Judge's comment: Oddly, despite losing money on many sales, this concern is still in business. Numismatic News (NN), December 15, 1992.

The "it's a blast" award goes to double-winner Coast to Coast Coins for their announcement that "the gold and silver market has absolutely exploded." Judge's question: How many casualties? CW, June 7, 1993.

The "even more money was lost by doing so" award goes to double-winner Mount Vernon Coins for trumpeting "it feels just like the 1979-1980 market all over again! Was a lot of money made during that period just by buying ANY coins minted in gold or silver? YOU BET!" CW, June 7, 1993, page 11.

The "most unintentionally accurate statement of the year" award goes to The Mint, which achieved notoriety during 1993 by advertising great rarities at enormous prices. Their description of an MS-67 1856 Flying Eagle cent certainly cannot be gainsaid: "the importance of this coin can be overstated." CW, June 7, 1993, page 33.

The "George Bush poverty of expression" award goes to What-A-Card Sports Cards for hyping common coins based on high grades. In the ad, 22 consecutive coins carried precisely the same description: "one of the best." NN, December 15, 1992, page 16.

The "Bill Clinton memorial family values" award goes to the Connoisseurs' Club for "its first catalog of adult silver bars and rounds," parenthetically noting "you must be 21 years of age or older to order this catalog." CW, June 7, 1993, page 46.

The "logic, schlmogic" award goes to PCI Coin Grading Service for stating that "our founder is a champion of the *little guy*," then noting that "our graders, computer people, and finalizers work ... 12-15 hours per day, sometimes Saturday and Sunday." They also note that "our volume is not as great as some other grading services," shortly after stating that "it all adds up to why more collectors, dealers, individuals, and banks have submitted coins to PCI than any other grading service." NN, December 15, 1992, page 22.

The "even more bull on bullion" award goes to the Gold Discipline Amendments for solemnly announcing that "there is ample evidence to observe that gold is headed for one or two-thousand dollars an ounce." CW, June 14, 1993, page 24.

The "unforgivable adjectival overkill" award goes to perennial winner David Hall for this veritable gusher of overdescription: "Rare Gold Totally Sexy Gold Dollar 1857 gold dollar PCGS MS-68. This coin is going to be hard to describe in words. It is a glow-in-the-dark, ultra-iridescent, dripping with satin gold frost, absolute wonder coin!! A flawless super gem..." Mr. Hall also walks off with an honorable mention for the "I are a grammarian" award for the following boner: "Proof walking Liberty half-dollars are very similar to proof mercury dimes, except their bigger and even more stunning." CW, November 16, 1992, page 26.

The "just what we needed, more grades" award goes to Steve Estes for inventing a 10-point scale for "eye appeal" grade. The rigorous scientific demarcations on the Estes scale are as follows:

- 5 -- an average coin
- 6 -- slightly above average
- 7 -- excellent appeal
- 8 -- eye stopper
- 9 -- breath-taking
- 10-- a dream

Judge's comment: With luck, this is an idea whose time has come - and gone. CW, November 16, 1992, page 37.



The "gag me with a description" award goes to U.S. Coins for the following meaningless comments: "Revered date"; "PQ to the max"; "I live to describe it"; "The ultimate type coin"; "Colorific"; "Luster drips"; "A night light for a toddler"; "Godzilla black white monster"; "Power coin"; "Miracle coin". NN, January 5, 1993, page 25.

The "We are really a nonprofit organization. Really." award goes to double-winner PCI, which "confesses": "we had to admit the truth -- on many coins we lose money!" NN, January 5, 1993, page 31.

The "We also raise the dead" award goes to G & F Galleries for promising to find "impossible to find quality at sensible price levels." CW, November 16, 1992, page 56.

The "I am a profeshunal Numasmotast" award goes to Nunemaker's for this ad hawking bullion, which is transcribed here exactly as it was printed: "two things the medals will do for you despite what the soothsayers will tell you is in the long run metals are an absolute ledge against inflation..." CW, November 16, 1992, page 59.

The "we can only hope it truly is the last one" award goes to the U.S. Rare Coin Exchange for pushing "the ultimate catalog." NN, December 29, 1992, page 16.

The "you might take that two ways" award goes to double-winner David Hall for heading a full-page ad "The Bull is Back!" CW, July 26, 1993, page 21.

The "redundantly repeating yourself" award goes to the Coin Depot for intoning "the beautiful cameo proof surfaces on these coins are gorgeous." Judge's comment: Not to mention lovely and pretty. NN, December 29, 1992, page 13.

The "officially authorized -- by someone" award goes to Chattanooga Coin Company for offering "Ten (10) officially authorized Bill Clinton 'road to the White House-victory series' cards." Judge's comment: We never learn by whom -- if indeed by anyone -- these cards are "officially authorized". NN, January 19, 1993, page 19.

The "chutzpah in pricing" award goes to double-winner The Mint for an ad in which a \$500,000 coin was only the fifth highest price offering (after \$1.5 million, \$1.25 million, and a pair at \$1 million). CW, March 1, 1993, page 33.



The "but way over intrinsic value" award goes to double-winner Chattanooga Coin Company, for shilling the "legal tender" coins of the Hutt River Province, a self-proclaimed independent principality located in Australia. The ad notes that the coin, offered at \$12.50, is only "slightly" over its face value of \$10, but the ad is silent on the intrinsic value of the coin. Judge's question: If this "coin" is legal tender, just where can you spend it? NN, December 22, 1992, page 29.

The "but they're rapidly making history" award goes to past-winner Paul Sims, Incorporated, which proclaims "we have no such history of over-blown hyperbole," and then offers in the same ad "ultra-low mintage dollars red-hot sellers!...enjoying awesome world-wide demand." CW, January 18, 1993, page 15.

The "unique -- except for the 499 others just like it" award goes to triple-winner Chattanooga Coin Company, which offers a "unique silver commemorative from the Hutt River Province", then goes on to say that 500 of these commemoratives will be made. NN, February 16, 1993, page 17.

The "if we are lucky, they will pay off the national debt" award goes to triple-winner The Mint, for noting "our financial resources are unlimited." CW, August 16, 1993, page 29.

The "but can it walk on water?" award goes to triple-winner David Hall for describing the Eliasberg 1900-S Eagle as a "miracle coin." By way of contrast in cataloging styles, when it appeared in the U.S. gold coin collection sale, NBS member Dave Bowers described it as "a really special 'specimen'". CW, February 15, 1993, page 21.

The "history is bunk" award goes to Southern Coins, Ltd. for their puffing in the course of selling a Panama-Pacific exposition commemorative set. They start by calling it a collection of "near archaeological completeness" (judge's question: since when is archaeology "complete?"), and call the set a "time capsule of American history bordering on numismatic uniqueness" (judge's comment: not to be confused with unique, which this set is not). They continue to wax effusive, gushing that "Victorian era America is graphically documented in this rare memento." The judge wonders what a "memento" might be (perhaps a type of hydroponic tomato?), but since Queen Victoria died in 1901, and her son Edward VII died in 1910, 1915 is several British reigns too late to be called "Victorian America." They close by stating that "this collection IS the Panama-Pacific exposition". Judge's comment: This is amazing, for we never realized that the entire Panama-Pacific exposition could fit into a lock box in Metairie, Louisiana! CW, December 13, 1993, page 51.

Lest anyone think that coin dealers have cornered the market on ballyhoo, the Academy begs leave to present a pair of howlers from our sister hobbies of autograph collecting and sports card collecting.

The "clear as mud" award goes to the Beckett Monthly Baseball Price Guide for their lucid explanation of the meaning of the up and down arrows in their price guide: "Up arrows signify card or set prices that went up since the last issue. Down arrows signify card or set prices that went down since the last issue. Up arrows do not mean a card or set is going up or will go up. Down arrows do not mean a card or set is going down or will go down. The arrows have no relationship to the future or even the immediate present." Judge's comment: Thanks to NBS member (and good-guy dealer) Brad Karolef for bringing this to our attention.  
Beckett Monthly Baseball Price Guide, June 1993, page 29.

The Shammies also expands this year to include incidents in which dealers not employing hyperbole have made errors of an absurd or humorous nature.

The "I'm also interested in buying George Washington's VCR" award goes to Gary Zimet, who offered to purchase, among other things, "signed photographs of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Franklin..." Since all of these founding fathers died years before Daguerre and Fox-Talbot perfected practical photography, this would be quite an achievement. Judge's comment: Thanks to NBS member Dave Bowers for bringing this to our attention.  
CW, August 2, 1993, page 22.

The "neatest trick of the year" award goes to the Israel Government Coins & Medals Corporation, which, in the course of offering bullion coins to finance nature preserves in the Holy Land, mentions "a successful effort to reintroduce Biblical species that have become extinct."  
NN, December 15, 1992, page 12.

The "Dan Quayle's 'potatoe" award goes to the Mich-Matist for listing "Literary Awardse" in its table of contents.  
Mich-Matist, Spring 1993, page 1.

The "we're too busy to catalog around here" award goes to Superior Galleries for its October 29, 1993, mail bid sale. This sale contains at least 13 lots (1103, 1113-1118, 1120-21, 1123, and 1270B, F&H), that recommend the prospective bidder to examine them carefully in lieu of a real description. Judge's comment: Lot 1114 (quoted in its entirety) is a masterpiece of the catalogers art: "MISCELLANEOUS. An interesting assortment of slightly better material. Careful examination is recommended. Lot of 65 coins...(\$100 UP)". Superior Galleries, The October 29, 1993, Mail Bid Sale, various pages.

The "gosh, I wouldn't disavow it" award goes to Robert R. Van Ryzin of Numismatic News, for the following assertion: "In the case of the Hydeman sale, the offering of a 1913 nickel and an 1804 dollar in the same sale is an event worth recanting."

NN, November 2, 1993, page 19.

The "absolutely free -- if you send us a dollar" award goes to the A.N.A., which in a letter sent to its membership in September 1993, offered them a lapel pin for renewing their membership. According to the letter, "This pin is ABSOLUTELY FREE if your renewal payment is received by October 30, 1993. If you would like to receive this special edition ANA lapel pin, just include \$1 for shipping with your dues payment."

Letter from A.N.A. Director, Bob Leuver, to members, September 1993.

The "most unusual inundation ever" award goes to the Coin World headline writer who trumpeted "fake £1 coins flooding London, other areas of Great Britain." The sub-headline is also notable for managing to grasp the obvious, stating "police say fakes may be mass produced."

CW, September 13, 1991, page 1.

The "for those who believe they have gotten the shaft in coins" award goes to Alaric's Plunder for offering Roman bronze phalluses at \$170 each. NN, February 9, 1993, page 41.

The "I can't believe I ate the whole thing" award goes to the Coin World's staff writer commenting on provenance of the Joseph J. Mickley Class 1 1804 Silver dollar. According to this writer, "Mickley held the coin until 1867, when he commissioned W. Elliot Woodward to sell his coin at auction. Passing through William A. Lilliendahl, Edward Cogan, and William Sumner Appleton, the coin made its way into the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society..." Judge's comment: If this coin has indeed passed through three people, it must be classified as dipped!

CW, September 28, 1993, page 1.

The "sexiest comment of the year" award goes to Anthony Swiatek, who, in an issue of the Anthony Swiatek Numismatic Report, placed this caption under a picture of Swiatek chatting with an athletic young man: "Your editor with the American League's 1993 All-Star Catcher Ivan 'Puggy' Rodriguez. We were discussing his entrance into coin collecting and women." Judge's comment: Please, Anthony, let's stick to coins in the future!

Anthony Swiatek Numismatic Report, June & July 1993, page 7.

This concludes the anniversary edition of the "Shammies." Next year the Academy will launch its second half-decade of recognizing the ways in which the English language is tortured in the service of commerce in coins.

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EARLY VERMONT LITERATURE  
Tony Carlotto

For the past six years I have been working on a new guide and reference for the copper coins of Vermont that were minted from 1785 to 1789. William Parkinson, a bookseller dealing in Vermontiana, has stocked me with no fewer than 200 pieces of literature. His monthly list is my main lifeline for information, and with several others, I have been fortunate to find most of the available information. Unfortunately my bookshelves are over-stuffed, but many hours of enjoyable reading have ensued. These volumes are accompanied by my numismatic literature collection, and hopefully all this information will sift into a worthwhile effort.

In the course of my data gathering, it was amusing to see how some of the "facts" were passed along in time from one writer to the next. This evolution of information was first noticed by Edmund F. Slafter in his 1870 work, *The Vermont Coinage*, published by the Vermont Historical Society. On page 307, Slafter writes "It is marvelous with what facility the 'surmise' of one writer becomes the 'impression' of the next, and 'the distinct opinion' of the third, and so on, *crescens eundo*, until it becomes announced, without any foundation whatever, as the genuine fact of history." I am not the first person to quote the previous statement; Eric Newman was also amused by it.<sup>1</sup> With that statement in mind, my work has been progressing very slowly. Because I was not in Vermont in the 1780's, I cannot be sure of anything, except of the extant coins themselves. You might want to believe everything you read, but unfortunately it is not all true. Newspaper accounts are mostly good information, but they can be misleading. Unfortunately, neither Reuben Harmon nor his co-workers left a diary about the Vermont coinage venture. In view of this misfortune, we have to go on what is available. This article will be presented in chronological order, as much as possible.

Most numismatic writings of today about colonial coppers draw mainly from the great work of Sylvester Sage Crosby. His research of the early 1870's culminated in *The Early Coins of America*, a volume that has withstood the test of time for scholarship and accuracy. For a work that was written before telephones, computers, fax machines, and a host of other electronics, we have, nevertheless, a virtual colonial bible. I often wondered where Crosby got his Vermont data from, as so many questions bothered me - and still do. From reading the section on Vermont coppers, I could determine some of the trail of information. It seems that Crosby had a knowledgeable friend and correspondent in Charles I. Bushnell. Crosby states "We have been favored by Chas. I. Bushnell, Esq., of New York, with extracts from his cor-

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<sup>1</sup> Centennial Publications of The American Numismatic Society, New York, 1958, page 532. Eric Newman presents an article on the British looking Vermont copper coins, "A Recently Discovered Coin Solves a Vermont Numismatic Enigma."



respondence upon the Vermont coinage..."<sup>2</sup> By the information that Crosby procured from him, Bushnell must have been a very curious individual, and gave Crosby exact copies of the Machins agreements, which give great insight into the duties and relationships of the ten partners.

Fortunately, Bushnell credited his source of material, a series of letters between himself and one Benjamin H. Hall of Troy, New York. Hall, a lawyer and newspaper man, wrote "History of Eastern Vermont," published by D. Appleton & Co, New York, 1858, now one of the standard historical works relating to this state. As its title indicates, it deals with that part of the state which is east of the Green Mountains. It is an excellent history, treating the various subjects in detail, and contains valuable biographical material.<sup>3</sup>

Another Hall, Hiland, was also keeping track of early Vermont doings. Hiland Hall was at one time Governor of Vermont, as well as a President of The Vermont Historical Society. As I cannot seem to find any earlier information than that of B. H. Hall, I began to wonder where his data came from. This is where the conjecture and speculation comes in for the first time.

Let's go back a little further and look at B. H. Hall some more. In 1838 Henry Stevens founded the Vermont Historical Society and had many historical documents stored in the Vermont Statehouse, many of which were destroyed in a fire in 1857. It was said that as a joke, Henry Stevens paid for many old early manuscripts with Continental money, which of course was worthless at the time. When people heard what he had done, many gave him many old letters and records to share with future Vermonsters. Luckily, historians Benjamin and Hiland Hall had copied many of Henry Stevens's papers, so all his important work in gathering historical material was not lost to today's generation.<sup>4</sup> From the content of Benjamin Hall's information of the early Vermont coinage, it seems that he had done his homework, and was possibly preparing another history of some sort. Perhaps a book on the western section of Vermont was in the works, but never completed.

This Hall material seems to be the basis of the Hickcox, Dickeson, Slafter, and Crosby works that appeared after the Hall-Bushnell letters. So it appears that Benjamin Hall was very interested in the early Vermont coinage by the detail of his letters, and credit could possibly go back further to Henry Stevens. I have been having a little trouble getting to Henry Steven's early information, a project all by itself. It seems that he did not leave any written material on coinage that has survived.

In reading all the Vermont coinage data that I could find, a certain group of information keeps coming up over and over again. I became more curious, and had to find out where this data came from. The facts about

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<sup>2</sup> Crosby, Sylvester S., *The Early Coins of America*, 1875, page 187.

<sup>3</sup> Crockett, Walter H. "The History of Vermont" Volume V, page 542, The Century History Co. Inc., New York, 1921.

<sup>4</sup> Cheney, Cora *Vermont-The State With The Storybook Past*, Shelburne VT, 1979, pages 104-105.

"much expense incurred in the building of the mint, a small 16x18 foot building," and "about 60 coins per minute could be struck, although 30 was the usual number," are used by most writers of the early copper coinage of Vermont. The size of the building is information from B. H. Hall, and the rate of striking the coins is from a letter to Hall from Julian Harmon, Reuben's grandson. The expenses of building details are from a petition presented to the Vermont legislature on October 23rd, 1786, the bill being passed the next day extending Harmon's right to coin for eight more years than the two originally granted.

Crosby cites three letters from B. H. Hall to Charles Bushnell in the mid 1850's that contain most of the historical data that is available today. In reading about these letters, we learn that Abel Buell's grandson, Abel Buell Moore,<sup>5</sup> and Julian corresponded with Hall, and are the basis for most of the writings that followed. Hall seemed to know where to get the knowledge he needed about the copper coinage. It would be glorious to find *his* diary also.

Between 1858 and 1861 a flurry of numismatic literature that included mention of the Vermont copper venture came on the scene. In 1858 appeared John Hickcox's, *An Historical Account of American Coinage*. The details of the previous mentioned letter from Julian Harmon form the basis of this work, as does the work of B. H. Hall, although Hickcox does not give him credit.

The second book to appear was Montroville Dickeson's *American Numismatical Manual*, the first attempt to classify coins by variety and adding a little historical information as well. While most of Dickeson's writing seems to have been the result of his own research, one coincidence that stands out is his mention of Harmon's right to coin being extended for eight more years. Dickeson also mentions the two locations of minting, one being in Rupert, and the other "near the great pond in the county of Ulster" (Machin's Mills).<sup>6</sup>

Harper's New Monthly Magazine in March of 1860 contained a section on "Coin in America," by William C. Prime, and a year later "Coins, Medals, and Seals". The line drawings are the same in both works, and of a quality between the vague illustrations in Dickeson, and the very accurate cuts that would appear later in Slafter and Crosby.

At the end of the Harper's Magazine article, Prime mentions other sources of numismatic writing. Included in these are Dickeson, and the

<sup>5</sup>Abel Buell Moore was born in 1806, probably in Rupert Vermont, the son of Grove Moore and Mary Buell Moore. Mary was Abel's daughter, and Grove owned the land on which the first Harmon mint was situated. The most interesting situation evolves from a strange relationship. When Mary died, Grove married Rueben Harmon's daughter Ruth. This happened in 1814, a year after Ruth's first husband died. This would technically make Abel Buell Moore, Reuben Harmon's step-grandson.

<sup>6</sup>Some of the Machin's material comes from Simms' History of Schoharie County (New York). The first mention of it is found in Hickcox. Bushnell gets credit from Crosby for furnishing most of the Machin's details. Jephtha Root Simms was also an Orange County historian. Crosby mentions one "Eager" as being an author of "History of Orange County."



British "Coin Collectors Manual." by Noel Humphreys. More interesting, is the following which I include verbatim. "Mr. Bushnell's *Arrangements of Tradesmen's Cards, Political Tokens, etc* is an excellent work as far as it goes, and, with the Supplement, which the editor is now preparing, will be a complete guide to this department of the science in this country."<sup>7</sup> By the content of the previous, it shows that Prime was aware of Bushnell and was in contact with him for some of the details about which he was writing.

One more interesting observation of the Harpers article, is its ending. "Many readers of the Magazine, who do not care to make collections themselves, are possessed of coins which are mentioned in this article or of others not referred to here, which ought to form specimens in collections where their historical value will be appreciated, and be of public benefit. Every reader hereof who has in his or her drawer or purse a curious coin prized only as a pocket-piece, should remember that this very coin might be of interest and historical value if it formed a part of a collection. It may be the very link wanting to an interesting chain of evidence, or it may be the very specimen that will clear up all doubt on a question of history. Send such coins at once to some collector, or a public institution, and in default of knowing where to send them, forward them to us."<sup>8</sup> Variety and coin collecting seemed to becoming popular, according to the language of the previous statement.

With this Vermont theme, it is now time to show Abby Maria Hemenway's work that had an entertaining section about the coppers of that state. The "Vermont Quarterly Gazetteer" was issued in magazine format beginning in the early 1860's. It was referred to as "A Historical Magazine - Embracing a Digest of the History of Each Town" on its cover. Volume N<sup>o</sup>2, dated October 1861, covers the towns of Bennington County, with the town of Rupert being described in varying detail, and a page and a half being devoted to "Reuben Harmon and His Coinage." The Rupert section is given the byline of one Dr. Henry Sheldon and contains the coincidental information - the expense of the operation, the rate of coinage, etc, plus the mention of the "famous" story about William Buell fleeing the Indians.<sup>9</sup>

The classic Vermont work on the copper coinage is Slafter's *The Vermont Coinage*, published in 1870 as part of the *Collections of The Vermont Historical Society*, Volume 1. This first volume contained a dozen articles

<sup>7</sup>Harper's New Monthly Magazine, March 1860, page 478.

<sup>8</sup>ibid , page 478-479.

<sup>9</sup>This story appears frequently in Vermont copper writings. William Buell, having occasion to use aquafortis, a chemical also known as nitric acid, used in refining silver and gold, had procured a quantity in a jug from a druggist and was returning to his residence, when he was accosted by some Indians, who insisted upon drinking from the jug what they assumed to be rum. He told them that the jug contained Aquafortis, and that it would poison them, but the Indians supposed this a mere pretense, took the jug and drank from it, one soon dying from the effects. Buell was accused of killing the Indian and sought refuge, privately, in the then newly settled, and unacknowledged State of Vermont.

about important Vermont history, was "bound in cloth or in boards uncut; to members of the Society whose fees are paid, \$3.00 to all others \$3.50."<sup>10</sup> A rare offprint limited to 50 copies and bound in green cloth was also produced. Slafter gives a very thorough history of the Vermont coinage without going into die varieties. He does mention different types, and shows them in two plates of line drawings, illustrating eight coins. Six coins have obverse and reverse, and two have obverse only. Illustrated are both sides of the three landscape types and baby head, obverse of bust left, both sides of 1787 and 1788 bust right, and finally the obverse of the Machin's type RR-27.

Much of Slafter's work is used correcting and chastising Hickcox, Dickeson, Prime, and DeCosta. A Boston resident, Slafter was a Vermonter at heart and a corresponding member of the Vermont Historical Society. The British insinuations are still not totally clear today, but seem to have come about by using various die combinations laying around at Newburgh.

At the time of Slafter's work, variety collecting was important to only a few collectors, and he may have felt it was not important. Although Dickeson attempted to classify die combinations, Crosby advanced it, Ryder and Richardson followed it, and Breen and Bressett completed it. Slafter examines the historical aspect of Vermont coppers, and compares his "corrections" with the writings of his predecessors.

In the late 1860's an interesting "beef" started between the learned historians of Vermont and New York, a controversy that escalated into written form for public perusal. Appearing in newspapers, and then in pamphlet form, the battle was on. Among the various subjects touched upon, was that of the Vermont copper coinage.

I have come across a pamphlet publishing an address by Hiland Hall to The New York Historical Society on December 4th, 1860 titled, "Why the Early Inhabitants of Vermont Disclaimed the Jurisdiction of New York and Established an Independent Government." This probably fueled the rift between the two states' historical groups, a feud that went back to pre-Revolutionary times.<sup>11</sup> As far as we are numismatically concerned, the debate continued in the newspapers starting with an article in the "Montpelier Argus and Patriot" of August 25, 1870 which gives a history of the Vermont coinage in approximately 1500 words. The writer lists his sources of information as

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<sup>10</sup> From an advertisement inside the cover of an offprint of an article in Volume 2, Collections of the Vermont Historical Society, 1871. The pamphlet is entitled: "Vindication of Volume the First of the Collections of the Vermont Historical Society, from the Attacks of the New York Historical Magazine," by Hiland Hall.

<sup>11</sup> At one time the territory now known as the State of Vermont, was claimed by two parties, one, New Hampshire, hence the early name of the "New Hampshire Grants" or also "The Grants." Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire granted land for settlement to many individuals who went to the new territory. At the same time, New York claimed the territory as part of its own. The settlers finally voted their own republic in 1778.



Dickeson, *The History of Schoharie County N.Y.*, *Vermont Quarterly Gazetteer* Vol. 2 (Hemenway), Thompson's *Vermont*, Slade's *State Papers*, and Prime's *Coin Manual*. Some of the information is the same as has been used and accepted since then, and some is conjecture by the writer, especially concerning the British head and legends. He mentions a 1785 coin with a VERMON AUCTORI legend, the head and name of George III on it, and called the Tory cent.<sup>12</sup> From reading Slafter's work, I believe that this article was written or copied from a paper read before the New England Historic Genealogical Society, on May 6, 1868, by the Rev. Benjamin F. DeCosta, A.M., of New York.<sup>13</sup> Slafter criticizes DeCosta for many of the same statements that were made in the *Argus* and *Patriot* article. The debate continues in the *Burlington Daily Free Press and Times*, September 22, 1870. In the first of two pieces of this day, the paper states "An article appeared in the *Montpelier Argus and Patriot* of August the 25th, apparently written in the interest of this New York coterie<sup>14</sup> by one professing to be a Vermonter. The writer assumed the truth of certain unfounded statements, chiefly of his own creation, and then under the guise of friendship to the State, made lame apologies for them." This is the type of banter that went back and forth between the two states in the mid nineteenth century. It is of interest to us that the issue of copper coinage was brought into the fray. A second piece appears on the same page, and is addressed to the editor of the *Free Press and Times*, and wonders why the writer did not offer proof to some of the statements. In his ending he notes "The truth is, the modern slander that Vermont issued coins for treasonable purposes rests upon no foundation whatever, and this new form of stating it cannot save it from an ignominious grave." The piece is signed, "Rupert."

We can see from the public war of words that Vermont and New York historians carried on the original battle of land rights and later battle of who was better or more loyal for almost one hundred years. During this time the subject of coinage came into the discussion many times, with New York historians reminding Vermonters that early coins were issued with George III on them for the reason of being loyal to the King. Hickcox in his work stated that "At the time the British in Canada, were carrying on negotiations with the

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<sup>12</sup> The only Vermont copper with a portrait and 1785 date is Ryder-1, Immune Columbia. Ryder-31 has the Goergivs III legend, but a 1788 date. The Ryder-13 Britannia is dated with a very weak 1787 reverse that usually does not show any detail at all.

<sup>13</sup>Slafter, Rev. Edmund F., *The Vermont Coinage*, 1870, page 312

<sup>14</sup>"This refers to a statement in the first of the two articles in "The *Daily Free Press and Times*" September 22, 1870, titled, "A fresh Attempt to Asperse Vermont." Appearing in the first paragraph was- "the recent abortive effort of a Mr. DeCosta to make it appear that Col. Allen was not the hero of Ticonderoga.....and the same clique of writers have recently undertaken to assert or insinuate the government of our State, during the confederation, authorized the coinage of copper money with British inscriptions or devices. No charge of the kind was made when the coins were issued, nor indeed was ever insinuated until the last dozen or fifteen years..."

leading men of Vermont,<sup>15</sup> for the purpose of making Vermont a crown dependency, coppers were issued having on the obverse A bust of George III, Vermon. Auctori. Reverse, the figure of Britannia. (Probably RR-13). Also, obverse, a bust of George III, Legend, Georgius III, VTS. Reverse, a figure of Britannia; Legend not intelligible. These were usually struck over British halfpennies."<sup>16</sup> This statement incited Slafter to chastise Hickcox by saying: "Such confusion of ideas, ignorance of history, and misstatement of facts, are rarely, as here, compressed into so few words."

There are still many questions to be answered with early coppers of the confederation period. I have tried to share with you some of my frustrations in gathering information. Until the diaries of Harmon, Buell, or Atlee turn up, we have to make the best of what is available.

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#### THE KATEN LIBRARY SALE, A REVIEW Michael J. Sullivan

The announcement of the pending sale of Frank Katen's personal numismatic library initiated a wide range of speculation among collectors as to the type and depth of material that would be offered. Few collectors or dealers have had the opportunity to view his personal library. Mr Katen's quick advertising blitz indicating the sale would be held in four parts over the next 1-2 years added to the speculation a wealth of material would be offered. As it turned out, Part 1 of the sale held March 25-26, 1994 in Baltimore was a typical numismatic offering with limited catalog descriptions.

Consisting of 1276 lots, averaging 32 per page, the catalog offered basic descriptions (author, title, number of pages, price estimate). Mr Katen could have embellished the catalog with personal experiences, background or historical information, or data regarding content to inform and support collectors. We were surprised and disappointed by the catalogue description for lot 129 regarding Harold Thomas' bibliography of United States numismatic literature "Not worth what I paid - \$12.50." As a collecting body, we need to support and encourage individuals' initial contributions to the hobby.

The first part of the sale was attended by eight floor bidders, a number which increased to eleven for the second session. A few of the floor bidders were operating on behalf of additional collectors and buyers. While mail bidders purchased the largest portion of the offering, most of the important material was sold on the floor. Highlights included an original 1686 Labbaci bibliography, which sold 490 on a \$400 estimate, Storer's *Medicina in Nummis*, \$425 on a \$500 estimate, and a set of the A.N.S. Library Catalogue with the

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<sup>15</sup>This statement has been a sore spot in many accounts of Vermont history. Any Vermonter will point out the real reason for these "negotiations." Vermont needed to trade with Canada with the easy transportation route by water - Lake Champlain.

<sup>16</sup>Hickcox, John H., *An Historical Account of American Coinage*, 1858, pages 31-32.



First Supplement, which sold at \$1600 after opening at \$1525. Hodge's Genuine Bank Notes of America advertising piece was eagerly sought by two floor buyers who bid the lot to \$190 on a \$15 estimate. Another highlight from a pure collecting point of view was a large offering of 114 lots of Wayte Raymond publications (fixed price lists, premium lists, monographs, books). None of the lots was available for viewing at the sale.

Cataloguing errors/omissions resulted in the return of several important lots. The 1881 Andrews (*A Description of 268 Varieties of United States Cents 1816-1857*) was returned due to the title page being a modern reproduction. The 1925 Browning (*The Early Quarter Dollars of the United States*), was returned as it turned out to be the 1950 Ford reissue. The hardbound version of H.G. Eastman's work on counterfeit banknotes was returned as 10 of the 54 pages of text had been removed. These problems and errors could have been avoided if the lots had been available for viewing. While Mr Katen offered lot viewing at his residence up to five days before the sale, this was just not practical for those who would have to travel a distance, and then return days later for the sale. At a minimum, Mr Katen is encouraged to select important works for display the day of the sale, which coupled with cataloguing enhancements, would be helpful to both collector and auctioneer.

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#### FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is almost time for our annual meeting, which will be held as usual during the A.N.A. Convention, Friday morning (July 29) at 10:30. Our speaker will be John J. Ford, Jr. The numismatic literature symposium will held the evening before at 7:30.

The news of importance to numismatic bibliophiles is that the library of Armand Champa is to be sold starting this November by Bowers and Merena Galleries. This follows recent news that Frank Katen is selling his library through his own auctions, the next of which will be held in November.

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#### FROM THE EDITOR

¶ We excerpt from a letter received from Michael Hodder: "The Winter issue of the Asylum is an excellent example of why NBS is a more interesting club than almost any other I can think of... Neil Musante's annotated bibliography of Baker's publications is what basic research is all about... It *don't* get much better than this. Joel Orosz's musings on what happened to Robert Gilmor's coins are interesting. It would be nice to think that Gilmor's things went into the Mickley collection because then their pedigrees would not have been lost. Maybe one day Joel will find the evidence needed to establish the linkage. I wonder what Gilmor meant when he said he lacked only seven gold, ten silver, and three copper coins to be complete. I really wonder what he meant when he said that Eckfeldt made things up for him at the mint!

Incidentally, Samuel Thompson's holographic MS "An Essay on Coining is in the A.N.S. Library. There was a typo in Joel's article - it is actually dated 1783. It is an extremely important document since it describes in some detail the coining process from start to finish. Thompson's MS was the basis for a series of seminal articles on Early American coining methods by Jim Spilman published in *The Colonial Newsletter* beginning April 1982."

¶ Ditto for a letter from Jeff Rock. "The Thompson manuscript is still in existence in the collection of the A.N.S. They have no accession records which makes it difficult to tell exactly when it was placed in their collection, though it is probable it has been there since it was offered in *The American Antiquarian*. For the record, it is dated 1783, is entirely holographic with handwritten text and handdrawn sketches of the entire minting process. Thompson was most likely a native of Dublin; the name of Matthew Bredan of Dublin is found on the front flyleaf... Not only is it one of the few contemporary sources that we have concerning the technology that existed at the time the state coinages were being struck (1785-1790), the fact that it is illustrated so extensively gives us a view of many aspects of the entire coining process."

¶ We mourn the passing of N.B.S. member Leonard Finn of Boston, who died in March after a long illness. Lenny was the consummate numismatist with interests in all areas especially in colonial and continental paper.

¶ Joel Orosz writes: "At its 1993 annual meeting, the N.B.S. Board created the position of N.B.S. Historian and appointed me to the post. The duties include documentation of the Society's history and, eventually, the preparation of a history of the organization. I request that any member with articles pertinent to the history of N.B.S. send these to me for archival storage. I am especially seeking correspondence, clippings, and photographs etc."

¶ The recent Mail Bid Sale of Numismatic Literature from the Money Tree is accompanied by an offer from the cataloguer of a prize to the reader who finds the most errors, factual or typographical, in the text. We feel it is poor form to make light of mistakes in one's own catalogue, one which presents itself as informative, especially when past errors reported to the writer are not corrected in subsequent catalogues. As a case in point, we noted in 1991 the following misstatements in the footnote of a lot description offering a copy of Crosby's *Early Coins of America*, a description which was repeated again in 1994. "In the late 1860s, the American Numismatic Society directed its publication committee of six, chaired by Crosby, to create the most complete and thorough work on early American coinage ..." Anyone who takes the time to read the history of this work, especially Eric Newman's foreword to the Quarterman reprints knows that it was the New England Numismatic and Archaeological Society that sponsored the Crosby effort, and that at the time, there was no American Numismatic Society. Then the New Yorkers were known as the American Numismatic and Archaeological Society.



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THE ASYLUM  
Vol. XII, No 2                      Consecutive Issue N°46                      Spring, 1994  
  
Editor: Charles Davis, NLG  
Box 547, Wenham, MA 01984

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## American Numismatic Literature

### by Charles Davis

Cataloguers of numismatic literature will often note a reference page or a bibliography citation number in their descriptions. Compare, if you will, the usefulness of supporting material found under Davis 313 and Clain-Stefanelli 12280.

#### Davis:

#### Dickeson, Montroville

313 *The American Numismatical Manual ...*

1859; Original cloth faded, spine worn, faint waterstain, foxing, in spite of defects, a sound, better than average copy; Sold by Kolbe 9:511 {6/1981} \$500.00

1859; Original brown boards, front cover detached, some foxing; Sold by Bourne 1:39 {9/1981} \$250.00

1859; Red cloth covers loose, light foxing, very good copy; Sold by Wilson 1:36 {12/1981} \$375.00

1859; Original red cloth, foxing, cover and first pages detached; Sold by Wilson 2:106 {5/1982} \$275.00

1859; Original brown cloth covers, spine ripped; Sold by Bourne 2:87 {9/1982} \$180.00

... These and thirty additional listings of actual descriptions of copies of this work sold at auction through 1990 are supported by the following sidebar.

"The first consolidated encyclopedia of American coinage covering ground touched on by Eckfeldt-DuBois and Hickcox. A handsomely produced work, large quarto, with 19 (20 in the second and third editions) tinted lithographic plates, the binding has not stood up to the test of time and fine copies without significant restoration are quite rare. The first section deals with coins of the aborigines and reflects the author's penchant for archaeological digging. The middle section covers colonial and state coinage and even attempts to classify the die varieties of Connecticut, Vermont, and New Jersey coppers (his collection of the latter was sold to Dr Maris who used it as the foundation of the his reference collection). The final section covers federal coinage with mintage and rarity tables made available to the collecting public for the first time. Published in three editions, the last two containing a supplement of new discoveries, Dickeson changed the title to *Numismatic Manual* in 1860. Quite scarce, although hardly more desirable, is an 1865 editions with "without plates" stamped on the spine probably issued to use up text after the supply of plates had become exhausted."

**Clain-Stefanelli:** "Many misinformations"

The only bibliography that provides real usable information on the numismatic and bibliophilic, of American numismatic literature. In the 1992 sale of the Mendelson Library, George Kolbe noted "It has proven to be invaluable in the preparation of this catalogue."

*American Numismatic Literature* is available for \$85.00.

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